



Suitability for Professional Practice Policy and Procedures: 2024/25

INTRODUCTION

All approved Initial Teacher Education courses are required by the Department for Education to have in place procedures for assessing the suitability of their trainees for professional practice prior to admission to the course and throughout their studies. In addition, Universities are required to ensure that only those suitable for professional practice successfully complete their studies. All courses are, therefore, required to operate procedures that serve to review the suitability of individual students at any point during their training and to ensure that such procedures allow for the removal of students who are deemed unsuitable to continue with their professional training.

Students are required to maintain their suitability for professional practice and remain responsible for informing the relevant person (usually the Course Leader) in a timely manner of any changes to their circumstances that may have any impact upon their ongoing suitability (this may include, but is not limited to, the acquisition of new cautions, reprimands or convictions, involvement in disciplinary proceedings, health or more personal issues).

Where a student is deemed unsuitable to practice as a teacher, the University may require the student to leave the University and terminate his or her course of study. The University's Ordinances and, Regulations (including Student Discipline Ordinance) and Examination Rules (as published via relevant handbooks) apply to all students.

Behaviour that leads to the Suitability for Professional Practice Procedure being invoked may arise at any time during any aspect of the trainee's course of study, regardless of the source or location of the matter in question and may relate to recent or historical issues and may arise from academic, practice or personal areas of a trainee's life.

\Note; Although this document refers to DBS, the procedure will also apply to any authorities that replace these;

PRE-COURSE ASSESSMENT OF SUITABILITY



of whether the course has begun (students will have provisional registration only until all checks are returned and deemed satisfactory).

Health checks are currently required and are carried out initially via self-declaration forms.

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Trainees may be re-referred to Occupational Health at any point during their studies. This may be due, for example, to a period of extended sick leave, the development of a new health condition or to re-assess health needs prior to the beginning of placements. In addition, all students who are diagnosed with a disability (except SLDs) or a long term illness during their course will be re- referred for a new assessment in order to obtain up to date information and so that the impact and recommended adjustments for practice learning as well as academic work can be considered.

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Suitability declarations will be completed each year upon enrolment and re- enrolment and YHM J JŰHY ÇEJ EJY " ZU'YRŰHŰJ ŋZE O U J Ř Z U

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Where it becomes clear that a trainee is experiencing problems which give rise to concern about their suitability as a trainee teacher, and where the trainee wishes to address such problems with assistance, the trainee's tutor will normally advise the trainee to seek advice and support from the University through such mechanisms as pastoral support, careers advice, disability support, counselling, study skills. They may also direct trainees to external services. The trainee may be advised to temporarily withdraw from studies pending attempts to resolve the issues giving cause for concern.

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The University, as represented by the course leader, will be proactive in considering adjustments that may be required and will also determine the reasonableness of any additional adjustments requested by the trainee.

- The trainee will have the right to be accompanied by an advisor or representative, and to make a written submission prior to the meeting should they wish to do so. The trainee will, in advance of the meeting taking place, provide in writing to the course leader the whom; any supporting written documentation the trainee wishes to provide; whether or not any additional adjustments for reason of disability are requested.
- Following the meeting, the course leader may institute any further investigation deemed necessary, including meeting with the person who raised the concerns, to review the evidence and ascertain whether concerns remain or have been allayed. If concerns remain, the course leader will determine whether the concerns can be resolved at this stage without reference to a Suitability Panel hearing.
- If the course leader, having consulted with the Head of School or other appropriate persons to a Panel Investigation and Hearing, he or she will set the trainee targets for change, scale (usually weeks). The course leader will normally review the situation at the end of the time period and, if he or she considers that the targets have been met, the student will be permitted to remain registered on the course. If necessary, the course leader may set a continued programme of targets to be similarly closely monitored by the course leader in consultation with the trainee's tutor, either until no further cause for concern exists, or there is reason to move to Stage Two. Where the Course Leader considers that targets have not been met, Stage Two will be invoked.
- If the course leader, having consulted with the Head of School or other appropriate persons, considers that concerns remain and, in their professional judgment, cannot be resolved at Stage One of this process, Stage Two will be invoked and the Chair of the

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Stage Two of the Suitability for Professional Practice Procedure

\Note; There may be exceptional circumstances where someone who has failed their Cause for Concern Process may move directly to Stage Two of the Suitability for Professional Practice Procedure; This may be due to serious concerns about impact on pupil progress or professionalism issues for example;

- When concerns have not been allayed or resolved during Stage One of the Procedure, the course leader will notify the student in writing that the case is to be referred to the Suitability Panel.
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- In any case where the trainee informs the Chair that he or she intends to be accompanied or represented by a legal advisor, or by a representative who is legally qualified, the trainee shall be accompanied or represented by a legal advisor. The University will not normally agree to defray costs incurred by the trainee in seeking specialist or legal advice, by their representative or by witnesses called by the student. Where no legal advisor accompanies the Course Leader, he or she may be accompanied by a colleague with appropriate experience for support and/or guidance during the hearing.
- The Chair shall have discretion to arrange for the Panel itself to have access to legal advice.
- The Panel, to be quorate, must have at least two-thirds of its members present. If the trainee does not appear at the hearing, the Panel may either proceed to deal with the case in the trainee's absence or, in the light of any mitigating circumstances communicated, agree to reschedule.
- The hearing will observe the following procedure. Those participating may not change, extend or distort the procedure or roles set out below, except by prior agreement with

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further steps should be taken, which may include termination of the trainee's course of study.

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 - received in time (or, if received out of time, whether mitigating circumstances exist which justify waiving the normal time-limit), and ...
 - that the grounds of the appeal are admissible.
- Where an appeal is determined to be admissible it shall be considered by an Appeals Panel, in one of these ways:
 - Where the appeal appears to be readily decidable in favour of the appellant on the basis of the evidence available, an Appeals Panel may reach a decision without the need for a hearing
 - Otherwise, the appeal will be examined at a hearing, at which the appellant shall have the right (though not the obligation) to attend, and the Appeals Panel shall be entitled to ask (but not require) the appellant to attend, to provide further information.
- An appellant who attends an Appeals Panel hearing shall be entitled to be accompanied by a person of his or her choice, who may represent him or her. If the appellant wishes to be so accompanied or represented, he or she shall inform the Registrar & Secretary ĈĴĴĴE ĴŪŌŪ ĈĴ ŪĴĈYĴ EŪĴ βŽEĴŴŪŌ ĴĈŪY ŴŪ Ĉ ĴĈŪĴĴ Ĵŋ ĴæĴ ĴŴ Ū Ĵ Ĵŋ ĴæĴ æĴĈEŴŪŌ ĈŪ Ĵ ĴæĈŪ ĈĴ that time also supply the name of that person.
- The appellant should provide any written documentation relating to the grounds of their Ĉ ċ ĴĉŪ ĈĴ ŪĴĈYĴ EŪĴ βŽEĴŴŪŌ ĴĈŪY ŴŪ Ĉ ĴĈŪĴĴ Ĵŋ ĴæĴ æĴĈEŴŪŌ
- The Appeals Panel may secure further information relevant to those grounds for appeal through consultation with the Chair of the original Suitability Panel.
- After the Appeals Panel hearing has been presented with the evidence in the case, the appellant (and the person accompanying him or her) shall withdraw while the Panel considers its decision in private. The Appeals Panel will normally invite the appellant (and the person accompanying him or her) to return to hear its decision. However, Appeals Panels reserve the right to defer immediate decision and instead to provide a later written decision. In such cases, the normal time-limit (for reaching a decision, formulating it in writing and dispatching it to the appellant) shall be seven working days MŪŪĴYŴ ĴĴæĴE βŴYĴ Y ċ ĴĴŴEĴĴ ĴĴ ĴæĴ ċ ċ ĴĉŪY ÄĈŪĴŪ ĈĴ ĴæĴ ĴŴ Ū Ĵ Ĵŋ ĴæĴ æĴĈEŴŪŌ ŴŪ βæŴĴæ ĴĈYĴ Ĉ Y ċ ĴĴŴEĴĴ EĴĈYŽŪ ŋŽE ŪĴĴ ĴŴŌ ĴæĴ Ĉ Ĵ ĴŴŴŽŪĈŪ Ĵime will be given to the appellant.

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Appendix VIII: Termination of Placements

Termination of Placements

In relation to questions of 'termination of placements', the starting point of the course is that this is a complex matter and the issue of termination of placements may arise for a number of reasons.

Termination of placements because of inadequate educational opportunities

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In addition,